

Where the rubber meets the road...

Dyess wheel and tire shop keeps base mission rolling



Airman 1st Class Lorenzo Cooper disassembles a B-1 main tire at the base wheel and tire shop. The shop averages working on more than 360 B-1 main tires per year representing more than \$9 million for that one type of tire. The shop also works B-1 nose tires as well as C-130 nose and main tires.

Story and photos by
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They say that an army moves on its belly.

While the Army may move on its belly, the Air Force moves on tires.

And nobody knows it better than the hard-working men and women of Dyess' Wheel and Tire shop.

"You can't fly if you can't roll down the runway," said Staff Sgt. Rusty Cope, wheel and tire section assistant section chief. "Success starts from the ground up -- from tires. We have an important part to play and we do our best to make every mission a success."

According to Tech. Sgt. Doug Hayman, wheel and tire section chief, the shop's mission is to provide wheel

and tire assets for the B-1s and the C-130s at Dyess, enabling the world's best Air Combat Command and Air Mobility Command professionals to deliver rapid, decisive and sustainable airpower anytime, anywhere.

For these maintenance professionals, the "money maker" or "money breaker" is the B-1 main wheel assembly. The price is more than \$25,000 each. This

cost includes only the wheel, tire, 18 tie bolts and 18 lug nuts. This cost does not include seals, heat shield assemblies, valve stems, disk brake keys or other various components.

On average, the wheel and tire section produces 70 mission capable wheel and tire assemblies. These assemblies include both main and nose landing gear assemblies.

As far as tires go, the shop handles an average of 30 B-1 main tires monthly during slow periods equaling more than 360 mains a year. While to some this may not seem like a lot, this represents more than \$750,000 per month and more than \$9 million annually just involving the B-1 main.

During day-to-day operations, the wheel and tire crews work in two-man teams. Even working together, it can take hours for each team to tear down, wash, clean, inspect and prepare a handful of tires.

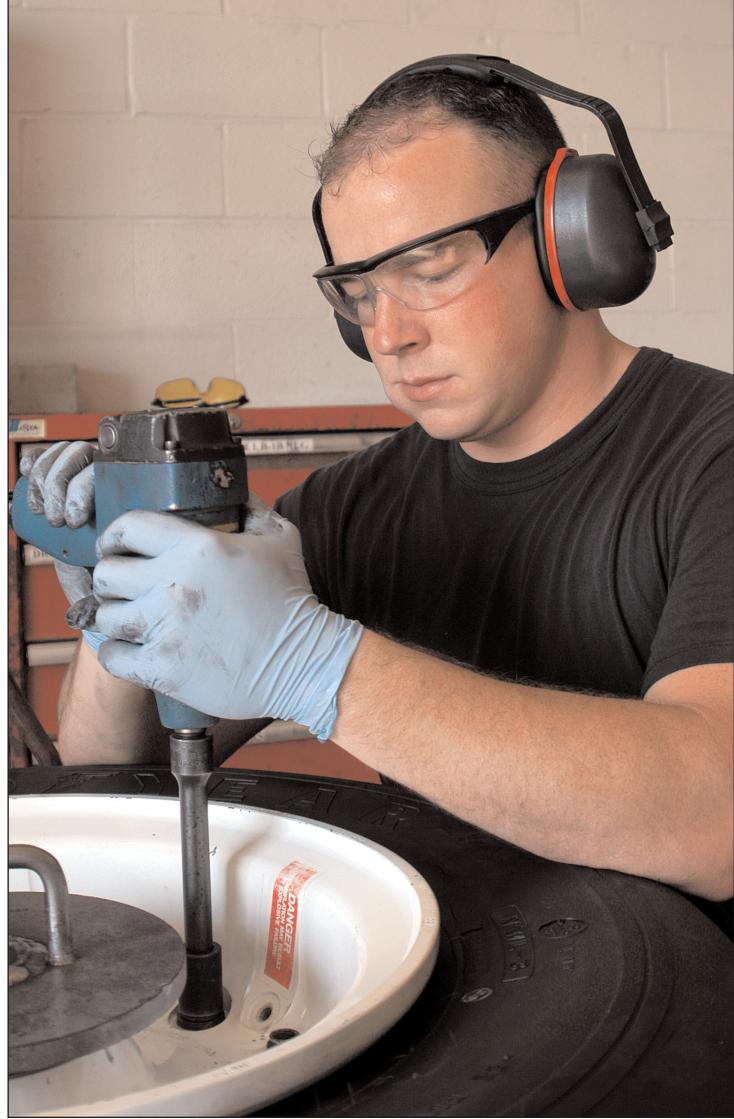
Despite a slowly shrinking amount of manpower, the shop still makes the mission happen.

"Our manning has been dwindling, but we still get the job done," said Sergeant Cope. "In fact, the only reason we get behind is when we run out of work and we are waiting on more parts or tires."

But for the folks in the wheel and tire section, the small shop attitude makes working there even better.

"All the one-on-one help I get from my supervisors really motivates me," said Airman 1st Class Lorenzo Cooper. "They really go above and beyond what I have experienced in other places. And that is definitely one of the best parts of our shop."

But overall, the hard-working Airmen of Dyess' wheel and tire shop strive to get the job done right --



Airman 1st Class Noah McCool works on a C-130 tire at the base wheel and tire shop. The shop is composed of Airmen from both the B-1 and C-130 maintenance backgrounds.

the first time.

"They are not going to be able to fly unless we do our job," said Sergeant

Hayman. "Just knowing

that they can't do anything without us completing our mission makes the hard work and long hours worth it."

"We don't look for praise or rewards," added

Sergeant Cope. "In fact, if we do our job right, no one knows we are here."



Tires at a Glance:

C-130 main tire total: \$7,381.83

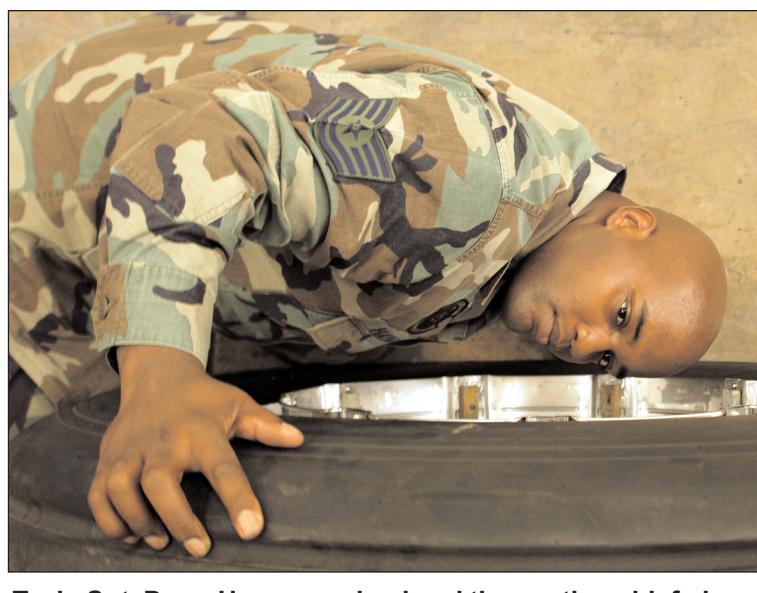
C-130 nose tire total: \$4,233.28

B-1 main tire total: \$24,325.25

B-1 nose tire total: \$5,000.97



A tire shows its wear as it waits to be inspected at the wheel and tire shop.



Tech. Sgt. Doug Hayman, wheel and tire section chief, does a final inspection on a tire.

The Dyess Wheel and Tire shop cleans each wheel assembly as part of their regular duties.

Before



After



Above: Airman 1st Class Noah McCool works on a B-1 main tire. Each B-1 main tire has 18 lug nuts and 18 tie bolts. Each tire that arrives in the wheel and tire shop must be disassembled, cleaned and inspected. Right: Getting their hands dirty is something that every member of the wheel and tire shop does daily, whether it is disassembling wheel assemblies or loading and unloading new and old tires.



First to Strike, Last to Leave! 9 w 89